

# Etikoppaka toys

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**In news**— The Government of India has conferred Padma Shri upon C. V. Raju of Andhra Pradesh in the art category to honour to the Etikoppaka wooden toy craft.

## About C V Raju-

An agriculturist-turned-craftsman, Mr. Raju has his origins in Etikoppaka, a traditional craftsman village in Visakhapatnam district in coastal Andhra Pradesh. He is involved in promoting the toy craft and usage of natural dyes for the past few decades.

## About Etikoppaka toys-

- These toys are made of soft wood and lacquer color. Coloured with natural dyes derived from seeds, lacquer, roots and leaves.
- The way of toy making is also known as turned wood lacquer craft. **The Etikoppaka toys are considered to be 'one with the nature' since they are made purely out of natural elements such as seeds, lacquer, bark, roots and leaves.**
- The wood derived to make these toys comes from the **'Ankudi Karra' tree (*Wrightia tinctoria*).**
- In the early development stages of the Etikoppaka toys, they were only used by children as toys for the purpose of playing.
- The natural dyes and wood used in these toys made them safe play with and durable. However, gradually the Etikoppaka toys adapted to a broad usage.
- Today, they can be used as toys, decoration items, utility items and even gifting items.
- For a long period of time, these toys were a part of the everyday lives of the people living here and in the

neighbouring villages.

- **Toy varieties include spinning tops, rattles, and animal figures.** Etikoppaka boxes are also used for storing jewellery and sacred materials like vermillion.
- The artisans who engage in this craft have received several awards from forum likes the National Innovation Foundation, **UNESCO CCI Seal of Excellence for Handicrafts and so on.**
- Moreover, these toys have also been displayed at various prestigious venues like the Rashtrapathi Bhawan.
- **The Geographical Indication (GI) tag provided to these toys in 2017** has further contributed to their significance.